



A REVIEW OF DATA ON BLACK AMERICANS



**"Hell Fighters" From Harlem
369th Infantry Regiment**

Sechault, France, September 29, 1918

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PREFACE

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SCOPE

The Topical Research Intern Program provides the opportunity for servicemembers and DoD civilian employees to work on diversity/equal opportunity projects while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tour, the interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile a review of data or research pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists, supervisors, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resources and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements of the DoD or any of its agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and selected senior officials to aid them in their duties.

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REVIEW OF DATA ON BLACK AMERICANS*

INTRODUCTION

According to the latest U.S. Bureau of the Census figures, gains have been achieved in the last 20 years in Black educational attainment, school enrollment, home ownership, and income levels of married-couple families (MCF's). Despite these gains, the economic downturn and the slow economy during the late 1970's and early 1980's disproportionately impacted on Blacks. By 1990, census reports indicated Black unemployment rates at twice the rate of Whites, sharply increased divorce and separation rates, and a rise in family households headed by Black women. As a result, the overall social and economic improvements for Blacks, which were apparent at the beginning of the 1970's, were not as evident during the 1980's.

During the 1970's the presence of Blacks in the Armed Forces had steadily increased, and this increase continued in the 1980's. Correspondingly, Black representation has improved in the senior enlisted and officer grades. The addition of several Black male and female flag officers in the 1980's was capped by the selection of General Colin L. Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 1989. In the 1990s Blacks continued to be well represented in the military. As of March 1998, almost one fifth (19.6%) of the population was Black. (5:12)

It is important to have an understanding of the history, contributions, current conditions, and other key issues for Blacks in the United States and in the military service. This paper will explore population, family structure and marriage, education, employment, economics, famous Black contributors and contributions, and military participation of black Americans.

POPULATION/GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

- Between 1970 and 1992, the Black population of the United States increased by 68 percent, from 22.6 million to 33.1 million. Between 1990 and 1995, the Black population grew at double the rate of the White population, increasing by 9 percent versus 4.5 percent for Whites, and 5.5 percent nationwide. (22:14, 31)

- In 1992 Blacks represented approximately 12.6 percent of the total U.S. population. (22:14)

* "Black American" and "African American" are the terms most frequently chosen in self-identification. For simplicity, and for consistency with our earlier publications, we use the term "Black Americans."

- By the year 2000 it is projected that Whites will make up 225.5 million members, or 82.1 percent of the population of the United States and Blacks 35.4 million, or 12.9 percent. By 2010, the number of Whites is projected to rise to 239.6 million, a 6.25 percent increase, whereas the number of Blacks is projected to rise to 40.1 million, a 13.5 percent increase for the same period. By the year 2025, it is expected that the White percentage of the population will drop to 78.3 percent, while the Black percentage will increase to 14.2. (22:14)

- In 1990 the total of all Black Americans residing in the South was 52.8 percent, making up 18.5 percent of the total population of the South. (22:31)

- In 1992 approximately 56 percent of the Black population lived in central cities (e.g., cities like New York, Los Angeles, Washington, DC). This is more than double the number of Whites who lived in central cities, 26 percent. (20:32)

EMPLOYMENT

- Of approximately 14.8 million Black people who were in the civilian labor force in 1995, 10.6 percent of males were unemployed, and 10.2 percent of females were unemployed. This compares with an unemployment rate for Whites of 4.9 percent for males, and 4.8 percent for females. These rates are considerably lower than the highs in 1983 of 21.0 percent unemployment for Blacks and 9.7 percent for Whites. However, the annual unemployment rate for Blacks continues to be, on average, more than double that of Whites. (21:395; 22:401)

- In 1995, although Blacks comprised approximately 10.6 percent of the total civilian work force, they constituted 20 percent of all private household cleaners and servants. This figure has dropped from 42.4 percent in 1983. Conversely, Blacks made up 4.9 percent of all physicians, 3.6 percent of all lawyers, 4.7 percent of all engineers, 6.2 percent of all college professors, and 7.5 percent of all managers and administrators. (22:405-407)

INCOME

- Black married couple families registered a 73.7 percent gain in median income between 1989 and 1994 (from \$29,876/year to \$40,432/year). Despite this apparent gain, their median income was still significantly lower than the median income for White married couple families (\$36,739/year in 1989 and \$45,555/year in 1994). (21:416; 22:463)

- Median income for White families in 1994 was \$40,884/year; median income for Black families in 1994 was \$24,698/year. The median income for Black families is 60 percent of the median income for White families. (22:466)

- According to the Bureau of Census, "From 1960 through 1990, the poverty rate for Blacks has been significantly higher than the poverty rate for any other race group, followed by the rate for persons of Hispanic origin. The poverty rate for Whites was lowest." (19:13)

- In 1994, approximately 10.1 million Blacks (30.6 percent) and 25.3 million Whites (11.7 percent) had incomes below the poverty level (based on cash incomes only and not including the value of benefits such as food stamps and other public assistance programs). (22:472)

FAMILY

- There was a decrease in Black married couple families between 1980 and 1995 from 55.5 percent to 47.5 percent of all Black families. In 1995, approximately 46 percent of all Black families were headed by women with no spouse present, up from 40.3 percent in 1980. (22:48)
- According to the Bureau of the Census, “the increase in Black female householder families reflects more divorces and separations, as well as the rise in the proportion of never married Black women who maintain their own families.” (20:34)
- In 1994, the median annual income of those families headed by Black females with no spouse present was \$14,650, about one-third of that of Black married couple families (\$40,432), and just over half that of White female householders (\$22,605). (22:463)

EDUCATION

- In 1995, 73.4 percent of Black men and 74.1 percent of Black women (25 years and older) had completed four years of high school or more, as compared with 83.0 percent for Whites (men and women) and 52.9 percent for Hispanic men and 53.8 percent for Hispanic women. (22:159)
- The percentage of Blacks with four or more years of college has steadily increased from 4.4 percent in 1970, to 8.4 percent in 1980, and most recently in 1995 to 13.6 percent for men and 12.9 percent for women. The statistics for Whites in 1995 were 27.2 percent (men) and 21.0 percent (women). (22:159)

HEALTH INSURANCE

- The percentage of persons not covered by health insurance in 1990 was 12.9 percent. The census shows that 18 percent of Black Americans had no health insurance, compared to 12 percent of their White counterparts. (20:32)

FAMOUS BLACK CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Black Americans have contributed much toward shaping America's history, often against considerable odds. Changes in attitudes and advances in civil rights allowed more Blacks to reach the forefront of American politics, public service, the entertainment industry, and national sports in the late 1980's and early 1990's. For example, **L. Douglas Wilder** was elected as the first Black governor of Virginia. In fact, he is the first Black man elected governor of any state in the United States of America. Likewise, **David Dinkins** was elected the first Black mayor of New York City. Justice **Clarence Thomas** took the place of Justice **Thurgood Marshall** as the only Black member of the Supreme Court.

An unprecedented number of Blacks were working in the Clinton Administration in 1998. No less than 60 Blacks are on the White House staff as aides and Cabinet members. Black Cabinet appointees included Transportation Secretary **Rodney Slater**, Labor Secretary **Alexis M. Herman**, Budget Director **Franklin Raines**, personal aide **Robert Nash**, **Thurgood Marshall, Jr.**, secretary of the Cabinet, and **Togo West**, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. (15:5)

Although 1992 will be remembered as "the Year of the Woman," it was also "the Year of the Black woman." In September 1992, **Dr. Mae Jemison** became the first Black female astronaut to successfully complete a space shuttle mission. In November 1992, **Carol Moseley-Braun** became the first Black Democrat and the first Black woman to be elected to the U. S. Senate. President Clinton named **Hazel O'Leary**, a Black woman, as Secretary of Energy. For the first time, a Black woman would hold a cabinet position outside the field of health, education, welfare or housing, and urban development. Additionally, President Clinton invited **Maya Angelou**, a famous Black poet, to read a sampling of her work at his inauguration.

Listed here are only a few of the more prominent Black Americans who have made contributions. To list them all would be an insurmountable task.

- POLITICS: **Edward W. Brooke** (U.S. Senator, Massachusetts); **Shirley Chisolm** (first Black woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and to run for President); **Barbara C. Jordan** (U.S. Congresswoman, Texas); **Jesse Jackson** (1984/1988 Presidential candidate); **Andrew J. Young, Jr.** (first Black Congressman from the deep South, [Georgia] since 1901); **Carl B. Stokes** (first Black mayor of a major American city--Cleveland); **Harold Washington** (former mayor of Chicago); **Thomas Bradley** (first Black mayor of Los Angeles); **Sharon Pratt Kelly** (first Black woman mayor of a major American city--Washington, DC); **L. Douglas Wilder** (first Black man elected governor of a state); **David Dinkins** (first Black mayor of New York City); **Carol Moseley-Braun** (first Black Democrat and first Black woman in the U. S. Senate); **Ron Dellums** (Congressman from California and first Black Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee); **Ron Brown** (Secretary of Commerce in the Clinton Administration, and former Chairman of the Democratic Party). **Alexis M. Herman** (Secretary of Labor in the Clinton Administration).

- PUBLIC SERVICE: **Frederick Douglass** (influential Black leader and abolitionist during the 1800's); **Carter G. Woodson** (founder of the Journal of Negro History in 1916); **Martin Luther King, Jr.** (civil rights leader, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, 1964); **Coretta Scott King** (widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., and renowned civil rights leader in her own right); **Malcolm X** (major Black leader of the 1960's); **W.E.B. DuBois** (sociologist/ historian); Justice **Thurgood Marshall** (first Black on the Supreme Court); Justice **Clarence Thomas** (replaced Thurgood Marshall on the Supreme Court in 1992); **Ralph J. Bunche** (official at United Nations, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, 1950); **Harriet Tubman** (established an underground railroad to assist in the escape of slaves to free states and Canada); **Robert C. Weaver** (first Black Cabinet member as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development); **Patricia Roberts Harris** (Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg); **Roy**

Wilkins (executive director, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People); **Mary McCloud Bethune** (educator; civic leader; first Black woman to head a Federal office as Director, Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration, World War II; founder Bethune-Cookman College); **William H. Hastie** (first Black Federal judge and first Black governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1937); **Jane M. Bolin** (first Black female judge); **Constance Baker Motley** (a Black female attorney who participated in the landmark Brown vs. Board of Education desegregation case and who later became the first Black female federal judge); **General Colin Powell** (former National Security Advisor and first Black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff); **Barbara Harris** (first Black woman bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Massachusetts diocese - 1992); **Hazel O'Leary** (named Secretary of Energy by President Clinton, the first Black woman to hold a cabinet position outside the fields of health, education, welfare and housing); **Jesse Brown** (former Vietnam veteran and first Black Secretary of Veteran's Affairs); **Willie Williams** (first Black police chief of Los Angeles).

- SCIENCE: **Benjamin Banneker** (mathematician, astronomer, publisher of almanacs, inventor of first clock in the United States, member of commission which laid plan of Washington, DC); **Edward Bouchet** (first Black to receive a Ph.D. degree [physics] from an American university [Yale, 1876]); **George Washington Carver** (agricultural scientist, botanist); **Ernest E. Just** (cell physiologist); **Charles R. Drew** (physician, "father" of blood plasma and blood banks); **Percy L. Julian** (soybean chemist); **Theodore K. Lawless** (dermatologist); **Daniel Hale Williams** (physician, surgeon, performed the first successful open heart operation); **Leon Roddy** (international authority on spiders). **Guion S. Bluford, Jr., Charles F. Bolden, Jr., Frederick D. Gregory, Mae C. Jemison, and Ronald McNair** (astronauts).

- ENTERTAINMENT: **Sidney Poitier** (first Black to win an Academy Award for best actor); **Hattie McDaniel** (first Black to win an Oscar); **Bill Cosby** (first Black to star in a regular television series, *I Spy*); **Bill Robinson** (dancer); **Oprah Winfrey** (actress/talk show moderator); **Whoopie Goldberg** (actress/comedienne); **Leslie Uggams** (singer/actress); **Eddie Murphy** (actor/comedian); **Will Smith** (actor); **Arsenio Hall** (talk show host); **Montel Williams** (talk show host); **Denzel Washington** (actor); **Halle Berry, Angela Bassett** (actresses) **"Spike" Lee** (producer/director); **Sammy Davis, Jr.** (actor/dancer/singer); **Gregory Hines** (actor/dancer); **Morgan Freeman** (actor); **Ossie Davis** (actor, playwright); **Ruby Dee** (actress/pianist, first Black actress in major role at the American Shakespeare Festival); **Carole Gist** (first Black Miss USA--1990); **Kenya Moore** (Miss USA-1993); **Ed Bradley** (first and only Black co-anchor of the popular television news magazine *60 Minutes*); **Bryant Gumbel** (former co-host of *The Today Show*, HBO sports analyst); **Greg Gumbel** (TV sports commentator); **Richard Pryor** (comedian); **Bernard Shaw** (co-anchor Cable News Network [CNN]).

- MUSIC:

-- COMPOSERS: **W. C. Handy** (blues); **Scott Joplin**, **Tom Turpin** (ragtime); **Harry Lawrence Freeman** (the first Black to write and produce an opera); **Florence B. Price** (first Black woman to win recognition as a composer).

-- MUSICIANS: **Joseph Douglass** (violin, grandson of Frederick Douglass); **Louis Armstrong** (jazz, trumpet); **William "Count" Basie** (piano); **Charlie Parker** (jazz, alto saxophone/clarinet); **Lionel Hampton** (vibraphones); **Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington** (band leader, piano); **Thelonius Monk** (jazz, piano); **Fats Waller** (jazz, piano/organ); **Miles Davis** (jazz, trumpet); **Dizzy Gillespie** (trumpet).

-- VOCALISTS: **Leontyne Price** (first Black international diva who paved the way for classical artists Kathleen Battle and Jessye Norman); **Marian Anderson** (major concert figure/pioneer classical artist and first Black singer signed by the Metropolitan Opera House); **Paul Robeson**, **Adele Addison**, **Martina Arroyo** (concert artists); **Mahalia Jackson** (gospel); **Ella Fitzgerald**, **Billie Holiday** (jazz); **Charlie Pride** (country); **Harry Belafonte** (calypso); **Nat King Cole**, **Lena Horne** (popular music in the 40's and 50's); **Stevie Wonder**, **Michael Jackson** (contemporary music); **Diana Ross** (singer/ entertainer); **Whitney Houston** (singer/ entertainer); **Lionel Ritchie** (singer/song writer); **Aretha Franklin** (singer/ entertainer); **M.C. Hammer** (rap musician); **Ray Charles** (singer/entertainer).

- LITERATURE:

-- WRITERS: **James A. Baldwin** (*Go Tell It On The Mountain*); **Alex Haley** (*Roots*); **Langston Hughes** (*Not Without Laughter*); **Zora Neale Hurston** (autobiography, *Dust Tracks on the Road*); **Richard Wright** (*Native Son*); **Chester Himes** (short story author, essayist, novelist); **Alice Walker** (novelist/poet who won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in 1983 for the book, *The Color Purple*); **Carl Rowan** (syndicated columnist); **Lorraine Hansbury** (first Black woman to write a Broadway play: *A Raisin in the Sun*); **Toni Morrison** (novelist and Princeton professor who won the Pulitzer Prize for the historical novel *Beloved* in 1988); **Ralph Ellison** (influential Black writer and author of *The Invisible Man*, 1952).

-- POETS: **Phillis Wheatley** (early American poet); **Nikki Giovanni** ("Princess of Black Poetry"); **Ntozake Shange** (chorepoem author/playwright, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow's Not Enuf*); **Gwendolyn Brooks** (first Black woman Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry); **Maya Angelou** (Black poet famous for her autobiography, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*); **Margaret Walker Alexander** (poet/novelist known for influential poem, *For My People*).

- SPORTS: **Alice Coachman** (first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal for the high jump in 1948); **Wilma Rudolph** (first woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympiad in the 100/200 meter dash and 400 meter relay in 1960); **Florence Griffith-Joyner** (runner and Olympic Gold Medalist 1988); **Jackie Joyner-Kersey** (runner and Olympic Gold Medalist 1992); **Emmett Smith**, **Rosey Grier**, **"Mean" Joe Greene**, **Bill Willis**, **Gayle Sayers**, **Marion Motley**, **James Brown** (football); **Walter Payton** (NFL Hall of Famer and all time career leader

in rushing yards and touchdowns); **Althea Gibson** (first Black female to win U. S. Tennis Association championship [1957] and the Wimbledon Women's Singles Title [1957]); **Arthur Ashe** (first Black man to win Men's Singles Title at Wimbledon, only Black man to be laid in state in the Virginia State Capitol after his death in 1993); **Lee Elder** (golf); **George Foreman, Joe Louis, Floyd Patterson, Mike Tyson; Evander Holyfield; Muhammed Ali** (boxing); **Charles Dumas** (the first athlete to high jump over seven feet); **Jesse Owens** (Olympic track star, four gold medals, 1936); **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wilt Chamberlain, Bill Russell, Julius "Dr. J" Erving, Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal** (basketball); **David Robinson** (U. S. Naval Academy graduate and professional basketball star).

-- **BASEBALL: John Roosevelt "Jackie" Robinson** (first Black major league baseball player, first Black player elected to Baseball Hall of Fame); **Roy Campanella** (Baseball Hall of Fame); **Henry "Hank" Aaron** (broke Babe Ruth's home run record, 1974; holds 18 major league records); **Willie Mays** (Baseball Hall of Fame, hit 660 home runs in his 22-year career); **Raymond "Hooks" Dandridge, Josh Gibson** (elected to Baseball Hall of Fame from the Negro League); **Frank Robinson** (first Black manager of a major league team); **"Bo" Jackson** and **Dion Sanders** (first two Black athletes to demonstrate excellence in two professional sports--football and baseball).

- **BUSINESS: Booker T. Washington** (educator, slave-born founder of Tuskegee Institute and the National Negro Business League); **Samuel Fraunces** (successful tavern owner, New York City, 1770's); **Paul Cuffe** (shipper/merchant, New England, 1790-1810); **James Wormley** (hotel proprietor, Washington, DC, 1800's); **George E. Johnson** (Ultra-Sheen Hair Products, first Black-owned corporation listed on a national stock exchange); **Leroy Callender** (consulting engineer); **John Sengstacke** (newspaper publisher); **Henry G. Parks, Jr.** (founded sausage company); **A. G. Gaston** (Birmingham businessman); **H. C. Haynes** (barber/inventor of the razor strop, 1899); **Wally Amos** (talent agent and president of the Famous Amos Chocolate Chip Cookie Company); **John Harold Johnson** (editor/publisher, Ebony, Jet, Negro Digest)

- **INVENTORS: Garrett Augustus Morgan** (gas mask, safety hood, automatic traffic light, first human hair straightener); **Granville T. Woods** (more than 60 patents, many of which were used by railroads, including a device which powered trains by electricity rather than steam); **Elijah McCoy** (self-lubricating machine, "The Real McCoy").

FIFTY YEARS OF CHANGE FOR BLACK AMERICA

For fifty years the Johnson Publishing Company, publishers of Ebony magazine, has served the Black community of this country. Their Golden Anniversary edition was published in November 1992. The following calendar of events in Black history was taken from that edition. These dates represent milestones in the struggle for civil rights by Black Americans: (7:168-174)

50 EVENTS THAT CHANGED BLACK AMERICA

1. **March 7, 1942** - First Black cadets graduate from flying school at Tuskegee, Alabama. In June 1943, the first squadron of Black aviators, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, flew its first combat mission, strafing enemy positions on the Italian island of Pantelleria.
2. **November 1, 1942** - John H. Johnson, editor of Supreme Life Insurance Company newsletter, organizes Johnson Publishing Company and publishes first issue of Negro Digest.
3. **November 3, 1942** - William L. Dawson is elected to Congress from Chicago. On August 1, 1944, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. of Harlem became the first Black congressman from the East.
4. **April 3, 1944** - The Supreme Court rules in Smith v. Allwright that "White primaries" could not exclude Black voters.
5. **April 24, 1944** - The United Negro College Fund is incorporated.
6. **April 25, 1945** - The United Nations is founded at San Francisco meeting attended by Black American consultants, including W.E.B. DuBois, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ralph J. Bunche, and Walter White.
7. **May 8, 1945** - Germany surrenders on V-E Day, Japan surrendered on September 2, V-J Day, ending World War II. A total of 1,154,720 Blacks were inducted into the Armed Services. Many returned to America and attended college with GI Bill of Rights benefits.
8. **October 23, 1945** - Brooklyn Dodgers sign Jackie Robinson and send him to their Montreal farm team. On April 15, 1947, Robinson made his debut at Ebbetts Field and became the first Black in the Major Leagues in modern times.
9. **November 1, 1945** - Founding of Ebony magazine marks the beginning of a new era in Black-oriented journalism.
10. **March 21, 1946** - Kenny Washington signs with the Los Angeles Rams and becomes the first Black player in professional football in 13 years. Three other Blacks--Woody Strode of the Rams and Ben Willis and Marion Motley of the Cleveland Browns--signed in the same years.
11. **June 3, 1946** - U.S. Supreme Court (Irene Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia) bans segregation in interstate bus travel.
12. **December 5, 1946** - President Harry S Truman creates the landmark Committee on Civil Rights. In October 1947, the committee issued a formal report, "To Secure These Rights," which condemned racism in America.
13. **July 26, 1948** - In response to widespread Black protests and a threat of civil disobedience, President Truman issues two executive orders ending racial discrimination in federal employment and requiring equal treatment in the Armed Services.

14. **September 18, 1948** - Ralph J. Bunche is confirmed as acting United Nations mediator in Palestine. On September 22, 1950, Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his successful mediation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. He was the first Black to win a Nobel Prize.
15. **November 1, 1951** - Publication of first issue of Jet magazine by Johnson Publishing Company marks the beginning of a new era of weekly news coverage in Black America.
16. **May 17, 1954** - In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court outlaws segregation in the public school system. Landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision sounded death knell for legal segregation in the United States.
17. **May 10, 1955** - Chuck Berry records "Maybelline," which played major role in development of rock 'n' roll. Berry and other Black stars, notably Muddy Waters and Little Richard, were the major musical influences on the Beatles and other White groups.
18. **December 5, 1955** - Historic bus boycott begins in Montgomery, Alabama. Rosa Parks sparked the boycott when she refused (December 1) to give her bus seat to a White man. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was elected president of the boycott organization.
19. **March 6, 1957** - Independence celebration of Ghana marks the beginning of the end for colonial rule in Africa.
20. **August 29, 1957** - U.S. Congress passes Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first federal civil rights legislation since 1875.
21. **September 25, 1957** - Nine Little Rock, Arkansas., schoolchildren are escorted to Central High School by federal troops, ending efforts to thwart court-ordered integration.
22. **December 17, 1959** - The founding of Motown Records helps change the understanding, marketing, and promotion of Black popular music.
23. **February 1, 1960** - Four North Carolina A&T students begin the Sit-in Movement at the lunch counter of a Greensboro, North Carolina five-and-dime store.
24. **May 4, 1961** - Thirteen "Freedom Riders" begin bus trip through the South to test compliance with laws banning segregation in interstate transportation. Black and White riders were bombed and savagely beaten, but their movement ended segregation in interstate transportation facilities.
25. **October 1, 1962** - Escorted by 12,000 federal troops, James Meredith enters the University of Mississippi, ending the state's defiance of federal law.
26. **June 12, 1963** - Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary in Mississippi, is assassinated in front of his home.

27. **August 28, 1963** - 250,000 people participate in the March on Washington, the biggest civil rights demonstration ever.
28. **September 15, 1963** - Four Black girls are killed in the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.
29. **July 2, 1964** - Civil Rights Bill, with public accommodations and fair employment sections, is signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.
30. **August 20, 1964** - President Johnson signs Economic Opportunity Act, initiating the "war on poverty."
31. **February 21, 1965** - Malcolm X, charismatic Black nationalist leader, is assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. Three Blacks were later convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.
32. **March 21, 1965** - Thousands of marchers, led by Martin Luther King Jr. and protected by federal troops, complete the first leg of the Selma-to-Montgomery march.
33. **August 6, 1965** - President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Bill which authorized the suspension of literacy tests. Federal examiners were sent to the South under provisions of the bill.
34. **August 11, 1965** - An insurrection starts in the Watts section of Los Angeles and rages for six days. The Watts insurrection was the first in a wave of major disturbances that forced a national reappraisal of racism in America.
35. **January 18, 1966** - Robert Weaver is sworn in as secretary of housing and urban development and becomes the first Black member of a presidential cabinet.
36. **October 2, 1967** - Thurgood Marshall becomes the first Black member of the U.S. Supreme Court.
37. **November 7, 1967** - Carl Stokes of Cleveland, Ohio and Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana become the first Blacks elected mayors of major U.S. cities.
38. **February 29, 1968** - The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) says in formal report that White racism is the root cause of the riots in American cities.
39. **April 4, 1968** - Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated by a White sniper in Memphis. The assassination triggered a national crisis with rioting in more than 100 cities and calls for racial renewal and repentance. President Johnson declared a day of mourning.
40. **April 10, 1968** - U.S. Congress passes Civil Rights Bill banning racial discrimination in the housing market and making it a crime to interfere with civil rights workers.

41. **January 23-30, 1977** - The ABC-TV dramatization of Alex Haley's *Roots* becomes the highest-rated drama in TV history and sparks a national "roots" craze.
42. **November 2, 1983** - President Ronald Reagan signs a bill designating the third Monday in January of each year as a federal holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Millions celebrated the first holiday on January 20, 1986.
43. **November 3, 1983** - The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, president of Operation PUSH, announces that he will run for U.S. president. His campaign generated unprecedented fervor. In his second bid for the presidency in 1988, he captured four state primaries.
44. **September 20, 1984** - The Cosby Show premieres on NBC-TV and changes the image of African-Americans and the viewing habits of White Americans.
45. **September 21, 1989** - Gen. Colin L. Powell is confirmed by the Senate as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
46. **November 7, 1989** - L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia becomes the first Black elected governor.
47. **January 24, 1991** - The spreading AIDS epidemic is called a major health threat to African-Americans by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Officials said the disease, which forced a major re-evaluation of sexual relationships, was the leading cause of death among African-American women 15 to 44 years old in New York State and New Jersey. African-American leaders cited the danger to addicts using infected needles and called for safe sex practices.
48. **March 3, 1991** - Videotaped beating of motorist Rodney G. King by White Los Angeles police officers sparks an international uproar. Four White officers were indicted on March 14.
49. **June 27, 1991** - Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall announces his retirement and decries the increasingly conservative direction of the Court. On July 1, President Bush nominated Clarence Thomas, a conservative Black on the U.S. District of Columbia Court of Appeals, to fill the vacant seat. Thomas, who was opposed by major civil rights groups, was confirmed by a narrow 52 to 48 margin after Attorney Anita Hill, a Black woman who had worked for him at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accused him of sexual harassment. Judge Thomas denied the charge but the Judiciary Committee hearing set the stage for the Year of the Woman political races in 1992.
50. **April 29, 1992** - Acquittal of four White police officers in the Rodney King case sparks biggest U.S. riot since the urban explosions during the Civil War. Federal troops were called out to quell rebellion. The L.A. Coroner's Office said 58 persons died during the disturbances.

MILITARY PARTICIPATION

Colonial Period

- Blacks arrived as slaves in 1619 (Jamestown) and 1638 (Massachusetts Bay Colony). For the most part Black slaves were not authorized to carry arms or ammunition. However, Black slaves were sometimes armed to assist in fighting Indians. As their numbers grew, they became to be viewed as a threat, and soon all of the colonies passed laws forbidding arming Blacks. (12:5-6)
- In Plymouth Colony, Abraham Pearse, a Black man, was listed on the roles as being capable of bearing arms, and later in the Massachusetts Colony all Blacks and Indians were enjoined to attend militia training. This militia service was scattered and New England soon followed the Virginia lead and began to ban Blacks from militia organizations. (13:9)
- Free Blacks were for the most part allowed to enlist as soldiers in the militia, but used mainly as laborers, cooks, drummers and fifers. (12:6; 13:31, 40)
- In the southern colonies greater restrictions were placed on Blacks, but in time of emergency Blacks were permitted, and sometimes required, to serve in military units. As part of militia units, Blacks fought in King William's War (1689), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), and in a multitude of Indian campaigns. In New York they fought in the Tuscarora War in 1711 and the Yamassee War in 1715, and in Louisiana in 1730 they fought the Natchez Indians for the French. (12:7; 13:3, 5, 8, 11)
- In 1735 a Spanish force was assembled in Mobile to again fight the Natchez. Accompanying them was a separate company of Blacks with free Blacks serving as officers. This represents the first occasion Blacks served as officers in a colonial military unit. (10:28)
- During the French and Indian (Seven Years') War, Black militia men served with independent colonist units mainly in support roles such as wagoneers and laborers. A few served as scouts and regular soldiers. (22:7)
- By the end of this period the Black population in the colonies had grown to around 600,000, and the fear of revolts caused the Blacks to be exempted from military duty, except in times of emergency. (2:40; 12:7)

Revolutionary War

- Crispus Attucks, a Black man who was the first of five to die in the Boston Massacre of 1770, is said to be one of the first martyrs to American independence. Eyewitness reports credit Attucks with shaping and dominating the action, and when the people faltered, he is said to have been the one who rallied them and encouraged them to stand their ground. (23:25)

- Black Minutemen fought at Lexington and Concord as early as April 1775, but in May of that same year, the Committee for safety of the Massachusetts Legislature presented a resolution that read: Resolved that it is the opinion of this Committee, as the contest now between Great Britain and the Colonies respects the liberties and privileges of the latter, which the Colonies are determined to maintain, that the admission of any persons, as soldiers, into the army now raising, but only such as are freemen, will be inconsistent with the principles that are to be supported, and reflect dishonor on the colony, and that no slaves be admitted into this army, upon any consideration whatever. (23:26)

- At the Battle of Bunker Hill, a Black man named Peter Salem saved the day for the patriots when, during a decisive third charge by the British Marines, he shot and killed the British leader, Major Pitcairn, turning the course of the battle. Another Black soldier of note at Bunker Hill was Salem Poor, credited with killing another important British officer, Lieutenant Colonel James Abercrombie. Salem Poor was noted by several officers for his "valor and intrepidity." Salem Poor was recognized again for his bravery and gallantry at the Battle of Charleston. (11:23-22; 16:3-4)

- In addition to being used as Minutemen, Blacks played an important role as intelligence gatherers. One such person, Pompey Lamb, was able to secure the password for entry into the British fort at Stony Point, allowing General Anthony Wayne to take the fort without firing a shot. (16:4)

- In 1775 the Governor of Virginia, the Earl of Dunsmore, issued a proclamation offering freedom for slaves and indentured servants who would take up arms against the rebels. By December 1775 almost 300 Blacks were members of Lord Dunmore's "Ethiopian Regiment." Their uniforms were inscribed "Liberty to Slaves." (12:10)

- That same month, George Washington authorized recruiting officers to sign up free Blacks, but still prohibited slave participation. However, some slaves still managed to enlist because unit commanders, always short of personnel, chose not to argue over the Blacks' "free" or "slave" status. Slaves also participated as "substitutes" for their masters. (12:11; 23:27)

- By mid-1778, an average of 42 Black soldiers was in each integrated brigade, and later all-Black units were formed in Rhode Island, Boston, and Connecticut. One of these units, relatively untrained, fought the battle of Rhode Island on Aquidneck Island in August 1778. It held the line for four hours against British-Hessian assaults, enabling the entire American Army to escape a trap. A monument to their courage was erected in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. (23:28)

- By 1779 the issue of enlisting Black soldiers had been resolved. With his troop strength dangerously low, George Washington welcomed all Blacks, free or slave, into the ranks. (2:209; 23:28)

- In a Colonial Army of 300,000, approximately 5,000 Black soldiers fought in most of the major battles, accumulating honors and praise from commanders. (12:15)

- The Continental Navy was small and ships suffered chronic manpower shortages. Although no ship captains were Black, many pilots were Black, and no state passed legislation barring Blacks from naval service. In fact, several states paid bonuses or granted freedom to known slaves as Black crew members. (12:14-15)

- In 1775 in the seaport city of Newport, Rhode Island, a recruiting poster was displayed seeking "ye able backed sailors, men white or black, to volunteer for naval service in ye interest of freedom." (12:14)

- Despite heroic efforts by Black Americans in the Revolutionary War, their contributions were soon forgotten and none were given much recognition or declared to be national heroes. At the end of the American Revolution, Blacks were virtually eliminated from the Armed Forces of the new nation. In 1792, the Militia Act was passed by Congress, restricting military service to "free able-bodied white male citizens," and most states followed suit. (12:18)

- When the United States Marine Corps was established in 1798 the rules stated that "no Negro, mulatto or Indian" was to be enlisted. (23:29)

- Lewis and Clark brought a slave named York with them on their 1804-1805 expedition of the Louisiana Territory and the Pacific Northwest. The Plains Indians had never seen a Black before and were fascinated with the color of his skin, which they believed to be a symbol of bravery. The Indians considered him, rather than Lewis and Clark, to be the leader of the expedition, which led to a safe passage for the expedition. (12:20)

Post-Revolutionary War

- Although Blacks were still excluded from most land forces during the War of 1812, this was primarily a naval war and experienced Blacks proved to be a valued and sought-after resource. Once again, recruiting white sailors proved a difficult task, and Blacks were welcomed to fill personnel shortages. Black sailors fought in every major naval battle of the War of 1812. Commander Thomas McDonough's victory at Lake Champlain was credited by himself as being due to the accuracy of his gunners, most of whom were Black. When Commodore Perry won his great victory on Lake Erie, at least one of every 10 sailors on his ship was Black. (12:22; 23:30)

- Before and during the War of 1812 Black slaves from southern states escaped and fled to a haven with the Seminole Indians in Florida. England and Spain refused to return these slaves to their owners. The First Seminole War began as an attempt to recapture runaway slaves. (23:33)

- The Second Seminole War resulted from attempts to remove the Seminoles from Florida to make room for White settlers. However, one-quarter to one-third of the warriors resisting this removal were Black. This Black presence among the Seminoles is believed to be the principal reason that removal of the Seminoles was sought, as they were attracting the Black slaves from the southern states. The Seminoles were "allowed" to move to Indian Territory, but only a few Blacks were permitted to go. Some escaped to Mexico, others were returned to their former White owners. (12:26-27)

Civil War

- Historians have argued the root causes of the Civil War for over 100 years. Clearly, the abolition of slavery and freedom for all Blacks was one of the major reasons that war broke out. Upon taking office, in order to avoid a break-up of the Union, President Lincoln announced in his Inaugural Address that he had no intention or legal right to interfere with the "institution" of slavery in those states "where it now exists." (23:35)

- In 1861 Secretary of War Cameron declared that, "This Department has no intention at present to call into the service of the Government any colored soldiers." However, General John C. Fremont issued a proclamation of emancipation in Missouri in 1861, and in Georgia, Kansas, and Ohio, Blacks were accepted into certain volunteer units. These orders were all countermanded or negated by the Federal officials in Washington. (23:36)

- By mid-1862 the supply of volunteers slowed down and Congress revoked the laws against Blacks in the militia or Blacks as laborers. Finally, in August, Secretary of War Stanton approved Black recruitment. Furthermore, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 22 September 1862 authorized participation of Blacks in "the Armed Services of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places to man vessels of all sorts in said service." (18:17-18)

- In May 1863 the War Department created the Bureau of Colored Troops to handle recruitment. The United States Colored Troops (USCT) were created at this time, but all officers were still to be White. (23:38)

- As during the Revolutionary War, many Blacks served as intelligence gatherers. Blacks circulated freely throughout the South, acquiring information from Blacks working for the Confederate Army and white sympathizers, and by spying on troop dispositions, providing invaluable information for the Union Army. (16:12)

- Black soldiers were paid considerably less than white soldiers until January 1864, when equal pay was achieved. (18:91, 254)

- Over 180,000 Blacks served in USCT units - 10 percent of the total Union strength. Another 200,000 Blacks served in service units. Only 75 served as officers. (12:55; 24:50)

- Thirteen black Noncommissioned Officers received Medals of Honor for action during a two-day battle in Virginia. In addition to individual gallantry, four were won by black sergeants who assumed command of their units when their White officers had been killed or wounded. (24:54-55)

- The first Black to be awarded the Medal of Honor was Robert Blake, a mess steward aboard the gunboat USS Marblehead. In an attack on Confederate forces on John's Island, South Carolina, Blake took over the dangerous duties of the powder boy, carrying powder from the ship's magazines to the gun deck, after an exploding shell killed one of the ship's powder boys.

His efforts were so fearless and efficient that his commanding officer credited him with the ship's victory in destroying Confederate forces ashore. (24:59-60)

- Of the 1,523 Medals of Honor awarded during the Civil War, 23 were awarded to black soldiers and sailors. (23:39)

- The Navy enlisted Blacks beginning in September 1861. By 1862, regular seaman ranks were opened to Blacks. By the war's end approximately 30,000 Blacks had served in the Navy, out of a total Naval enlisted strength of 118,000. (12:56-57)

- By the end of the war over 38,000 black soldiers had died--almost 35 percent of all Blacks who had served in combat. (24:54)

Indian Campaigns

- After the Civil War many units of the USCT were disbanded. Those that remained served initially on garrison duty in the South, but were soon transferred to Texas to diffuse the tensions created by armed Black soldiers in the South. (18:456-458)

- As USCT units were disbanded, Congress passed an act authorizing the establishment of the post-war, peacetime military force needed to help pacify the West. Two Black cavalry units were formed, the 9th and 10th, and the remaining Black infantrymen were reorganized into the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments. The 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments earned the nickname "Buffalo Soldiers" from the Indians, as much from their appearance as from their bravery in battle. The Black regiments fought throughout the West, from the Canadian to the Mexican border, fighting Indians, bandits, and horse thieves. They continued to suffer from discrimination, both in overt treatment as well as in the issuance of substandard horses, equipment, supplies, and uniforms. Despite this, they sustained a high level of morale and had fewer desertions than any other Army unit. Of the 17 Medals of Honor won by black soldiers during the Indian Wars, 11 were won by Buffalo Soldiers. (18:462; 23:42; 24:69-70)

- As a testimonial to their gallantry and faithful service, all four black regiments were retained on active duty by the War Department at the close of the Indian Wars. They were spread across the West serving in garrisons, maintaining a military presence, as well as serving elsewhere; a unit of the 9th Cavalry was moved to Washington, DC, where they performed ceremonial duties. (12:77)

- In 1866 the Army enacted a policy whereby all black units were to be assigned a Chaplain. In addition to their normal duties, each of these Chaplains were responsible for educating their black soldiers. The new education policy was implemented to help the freed slaves serving in the Army to prepare themselves for citizenship by teaching them to read and write. Chaplain George G. Mullins, assigned to the all-black 25th Infantry at Fort Davis, Texas, pointed out an additional benefit of educating the black soldiers. He found that in general, educational activity was connected with good discipline. In 1877 he wrote: "The ambition to be all that soldiers should be is not confined to a few of these sons of an unfortunate race. They are possessed of the notion

that the colored people of the whole country are more or less affected by their conduct in the Army." (9:95-97)

- In 1877, the first black officer in the Regular Army, Henry Ossian Flipper, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He successfully served in the black regiments in the West for four years, but came under attack by his fellow officers and was discharged in 1881 for conduct unbecoming an officer. The charge of "embezzling public funds" was never proven. In 1976, at the request of Wesley A. Brown, the first black graduate of the United States Naval Academy, and historian Ron O. McCall, the Army reviewed the charges against Lieutenant Flipper and issued an Honorable Discharge in his name. (23:42-43)

- In summarizing the effectiveness of the black units during the Civil War, General W. T. Sherman wrote to the Secretary of War, J. D. Cameron on 1 March 1877:

...I have watched with deep interest the experiment of using black [sic] as a soldier made in the Army since the Civil War... General Butler misconstrues me as opposed to blacks as soldiers for I claim them equality in the ranks as in civil life... I advised the word "black" be obliterated from the statute book and that whites and blacks be enlisted and distributed alike in the army.

General Sherman's recommendation on integration of the armed forces would not take effect until 1954. (23:43)

Spanish-American War

- When the battleship USS Maine sank in Havana Harbor in February 1898, there were 22 black sailors who died with the rest of the crew. Approximately 2,000 black sailors served in U.S. Navy ships during the Spanish-American War. (12:91)

- During the battle for the Spanish fort of Las Guasimas, members of the 10th Cavalry were credited with saving the Rough Riders from being wiped out by the Spanish. The zealous Rough Riders, a colorful but relatively amateur group of cavalymen assembled by Teddy Roosevelt, charged too far up the hill and became pinned down by Spanish soldiers. The professional soldiers of the 10th moved up to reinforce the beleaguered Rough Riders, saving the day and allowing the American forces to win the battle. (24:88)

World War I

- Over 200,000 Black soldiers were sent overseas during World War I. Approximately 10 percent were assigned to combat units. Four infantry regiments, the 369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd, were assigned to fight with the French Army. The 92nd Division, made up of Blacks, was also sent to France. (24:102)

- Over 1,200 Blacks were commissioned as officers (less than 1 percent of all officers). World War I saw the largest number of commissioned Blacks in the Army since Blacks were admitted. (12:132)

- One black soldier, Sergeant Henry Johnson of the 369th Regiment, was the first American of the war to receive the French Croix de Guerre. Before the war was over, 171 soldiers from the 369th were awarded the Croix de Guerre individually, and the entire regiment was given the award as well. The entire 367th was also awarded the Croix de Guerre for its part in the battle of the Argonne Forest. Forty-three soldiers and 14 officers of the 92nd Division were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery. (24:102, 111)

- One Black American, Eugene Jacques Bullard, served as an aviator in the French Foreign Legion. Fleeing racial persecution in the United States, he joined the Legion in 1911. Wounded twice and declared disabled, he somehow engineered a transfer into the French Air Service and became a highly decorated combat pilot. Having flown more than 20 combat missions, he was known as the "Black Swallow of Death," and his plane was marked with a heart pierced by an arrow with the motto, "All Blood Runs Red." Despite his record, Bullard was never allowed to fly for the United States even after the country entered the war in 1917. (8:18)

- Until 1991, of the 127 Medals of Honor awarded during World War I, none were awarded to Blacks. This changed on April 24, 1991 when President Bush posthumously awarded the 128th Medal of Honor to Corporal Freddie Stowers, a black soldier killed while leading his company in an assault against a German-held hill in France on September 28, 1918. The review of Stowers' war record by the Office of the Secretary of Defense was a result of an inquiry launched by Hofstra University Historian Leroy Ramsey in 1988. (3:A14)

World War II

- On October 25, 1940 Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., became the first Black American to achieve the rank of Brigadier General in the regular Armed Forces. (12:165)

- During the Battle of Pearl Harbor, Dorie Miller, a messman aboard the battleship USS West Virginia, manned a free gun and shot down six Japanese Zeros, for which he was awarded the Navy Cross. Miller was killed in action with 644 other shipmates on Thanksgiving Day 1943 when his ship was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine. The Navy later named a destroyer escort in his honor. Recently, there has been discussion in DOD circles as to whether Miller's Navy Cross should be upgraded to a Medal of Honor. (23:61-62)

- Between World War I and 1932 the Navy allowed only a handful of black sailors to enlist; these men were restricted to servant and laborer duties. Only after suffering a shortage of Filipino volunteers, who made up the bulk of the Navy's mess attendants, were Blacks allowed to enlist in larger numbers. Even then, they were only allowed to fill the vacant mess attendant positions. Finally in 1942, the Navy, after being virtually ordered by President Roosevelt to incorporate Blacks into general service, allowed Blacks to enlist for duties other than as mess attendants. (12:158, 200)

- On October 27, 1944, Steward's Mate Alonzo Swann shot down a Japanese "Kamikaze" on a collision course with Swann's ship, the carrier USS Intrepid. A wing of the aircraft hit the gun tub where Swann was stationed, killing nine of his shipmates. The commanding officer recommended all seven survivors, all minorities, for the Navy Cross. The men were eventually awarded the Bronze Star, seven levels lower than the Navy Cross, with no explanation from Washington. Part of the problem may have been Swann's rating as steward's mate or "messboy." Although he had never cooked a meal, he was so listed as such on the ship's sailing list even though he had been trained as a gunner. Swann launched a personally-funded legal battle to upgrade his award. Finally, 48 years after his heroic action, he received the Navy Cross. (1:16)

- Black soldiers saw little combat in World War II. There were notable exceptions, however, and the 761st Tank Battalion won the Presidential Unit Citation for its efforts in the European Theater of Operations. Although this all-Black unit was nominated for this award six times between 1945 and 1976, the award was not presented until 1978. (23:95-98)

- As an experiment conducted by the U.S. Navy in 1943, a submarine chaser (PC 1264) and a destroyer escort (USS Mason) were manned with predominantly Black crews. Initially all officers and petty officers were White, but on the submarine chaser the petty officers were replaced with Blacks about six months after commissioning. In 1945, the first Black officer in the Navy was assigned to the submarine chaser. Neither ship saw any action, and both were decommissioned after the war. Though the Navy took little note, the "experiment" proved successful; Black sailors had served in every shipboard capacity except command. One officer on the submarine chaser, Ensign Samuel L. Gravely, Jr., eventually became the first black flag officer in the Navy. (12:205; 23:114)

- In 1939 Congress enacted the Civilian Pilot Training Act to create a reserve of trained pilots to be called in case of war. Civilian schools were called upon to do this training, and there was a requirement that at least one of the schools train Black aviators. In early 1941 the Tuskegee Training Program was begun at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. A total of nearly 1,000 "Tuskegee Airmen" were trained through this program, and the Tuskegee Institute was the single training facility for Black pilots until the flying program closed there in 1946. At the same time, the 99th Pursuit Squadron was formed as part of the Tuskegee Training Program. Later redesignated the 99th Fighter Squadron, this flying unit, made up exclusively of Black pilots, participated in campaigns throughout Europe and earned three Distinguished Unit Citations. They were noted for destroying five enemy aircraft in less than four minutes, a feat that had never before been accomplished. In all, the Tuskegee Airmen destroyed 261 aircraft, and damaged 148 more. They flew 15,533 sorties and 1,578 missions, with 66 of their members killed in action between 1941 and 1945. (23:91-94)

- Another all-Black Army Air Corps flying unit, the 332nd Fighter Group, first saw combat in early 1944. One of their noteworthy achievements was the destruction of a German Navy destroyer by fighter aircraft, which had never been done before. This unit was placed under the command of LTC Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who was the first Black graduate of the U.S. Military

Academy to become a general officer in the Regular Army (he retired at the rank of Lieutenant General). (14:46-50)

- By the end of the war, over 700,000 Blacks had served in the Army, 165,000 in the Navy, 5,000 in the Coast Guard, and another 17,000 in the Marine Corps. Nearly 4,000 black women served in the Women's Army Corps (WACs). (17:395-396)

- At the end of the war, no black soldier or sailor had been awarded the Medal of Honor. A small handful had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and a larger number had won the Silver Star. More than 50 years later an investigation was launched by the Department of Defense concerning seven black soldiers and sailors whose exploits qualified them for the Medal of Honor. The outcome of the three-year study was a recommendation for the Medal of Honor in all seven cases. In a ceremony on January 13, 1997, President Bill Clinton presented the Medal of Honor to Vernon Baker, the only surviving member of the seven-man group. The President also presented posthumous Medals of Honor to the families of the remaining six recipients. (12:185-187)

Post World War II

- Executive Order 9981 was issued by President Harry S Truman on July 26, 1948, establishing a policy of equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. Also established was a Presidential Committee, chaired by Charles Fahy, which examined racial policies to determine whether Blacks were militarily and technically qualified to hold all military occupations, and whether segregated units should be maintained. The Committee concluded that full utilization of Blacks would improve military efficiency and that segregated units were an inefficient use of Black resources. (23:73)

- In June 1949, the first Black midshipman, Wesley A. Brown, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. Prior to this, the number of Black officers in the Navy had dropped from 58 at the end of World War II to only four in 1949. During the years immediately following the war, the Navy was following a policy of a 10 percent limit for black sailors in ship's crews. (24:147)

Korean War

- Initially, implementation of Truman's policy was slowed by the war in Korea. Part of the problem, at least in Korea, lay with local commanders; some chose to simply ignore orders to integrate units. That all changed when General Matthew Ridgeway replaced General MacArthur as Commander of U.S. and U.N. forces in Korea. Ridgeway successfully integrated all White units in Korea and disbanded all-Black units. (12:231-232)

- By the end of the war more than 220,000 Blacks had enlisted in the Army, making up approximately 13 percent of its world-wide strength. (12:232)

- Two black Army sergeants, Cornelius H. Charlton and William Thompson, were among the 131 Medal of Honor recipients. (23:76-77)

- Ensign Jesse L. Brown, the first black naval aviator, was killed in a combat mission in December 1950 and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal posthumously. At about the same time, Frederick C. Branch became the first Black to be commissioned in the U.S. Marine Corps. (23:77)

- "Project Clear," a study on the effects of segregation and integration in the Army, both in Korea and the United States, was conducted by the Operations Research Office of Johns Hopkins University and released in 1954. It concluded that racially segregated units limited overall Army effectiveness, while integration enhanced effectiveness; that integration throughout the Army was feasible; and that the quota on black participation was unnecessary. This study assisted with desegregation and by 1954 the last all-Black active-duty unit had been disbanded, while black enlistments grew. (12:232-234)

The Vietnam Era

- In June 1961, the first DoD directive was issued that was designed to eliminate off-post discrimination, and by 1963 installation commanders were made responsible for developing equal treatment in both off-base and on-base situations. Full implementation of this policy was hampered by the war in Vietnam. (23:83-86)

- During the Vietnam era there was a disproportionate number of Blacks entering the military. They were underrepresented on the local draft boards and often were unable to receive deferments. During the first five years of the war, Blacks constituted 10.6 percent of all those who served in the war zone, compared to 13.5 percent of the total national population. Blacks tended to stay in the military longer than Whites and to volunteer at higher rates for elite units, such as airborne or air cavalry units. The re-enlistment figures for 1965 are fairly representative; 45.7 percent of Blacks re-enlisted, while only 17.1 percent of Whites re-enlisted. Blacks also served in the infantry in disproportionate numbers. As a result, Blacks assumed a higher proportion of the casualties than might be expected. During the period 1965-1967, 20 percent of battlefield casualties were Black. Military authorities recognized this disparity and moved to correct it by transferring more Blacks to support positions. Tours of duty were ending for the initial wave of air cavalry, airborne, and Marine divisions with a large percentage of minority troops. The result was a decrease in black casualties to 13 percent for 1967, and a subsequent decrease every year thereafter. Of the 58,151 Americans killed in Vietnam, 7,115 were Black (12.2 percent). (12:257-259; 262-263)

- There were 20 Blacks among the 237 Medal of Honor winners in the Vietnam era: 15 soldiers and five Marines. (12:253)

- U.S. Air Force General Daniel "Chappie" James, a Tuskegee Airman, flew 78 combat missions into North Vietnam. In September 1975 he became the first Black promoted to the four-star grade. (23:159-161)

Post-Vietnam Era

- With the end of the Vietnam War in 1973 came the advent of the all-volunteer force. Other changes included a drastic increase in pay and a policy of equal pay for equal work. Enlistments soared. Whereas black membership in the Army of 1968 was 12 percent, it rose to 32 percent in 1979. (23:87)

- Equanimity in the all volunteer force manifested itself at a slow, yet certain pace. In 1964, black officers made up only 3.3 percent of the force. By 1976, this number had risen to almost 4 percent (See Table 1). In 1997, black officers made up 8 percent of all officers, while Blacks made up 22.1 percent of the enlisted ranks. (5:16)

The Role of Blacks During Operation DESERT STORM

- Civil rights leaders claimed that the disproportionate numbers of black troops in the Armed Forces at the time of the Persian Gulf war would lead to high percentages of black casualties. The Department of Defense has released figures on the percentage of participation of various ethnic groups and the percentage of casualties each group suffered. Blacks, who make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, made up 24.5 percent of military personnel deployed to the Gulf. Black personnel of all branches who died in combat or non-combat situations represented 15 percent (182) of the total casualties in the war. Whites, who made up 66 percent of the U.S. forces in the theater accounted for 78 percent of the deaths. Hispanics, who were 5 percent of the forces, accounted for 4 percent of the deaths, and Asian-Americans, less than 2 percent of the force, made up less than 1 percent of the deaths. (6:15A)

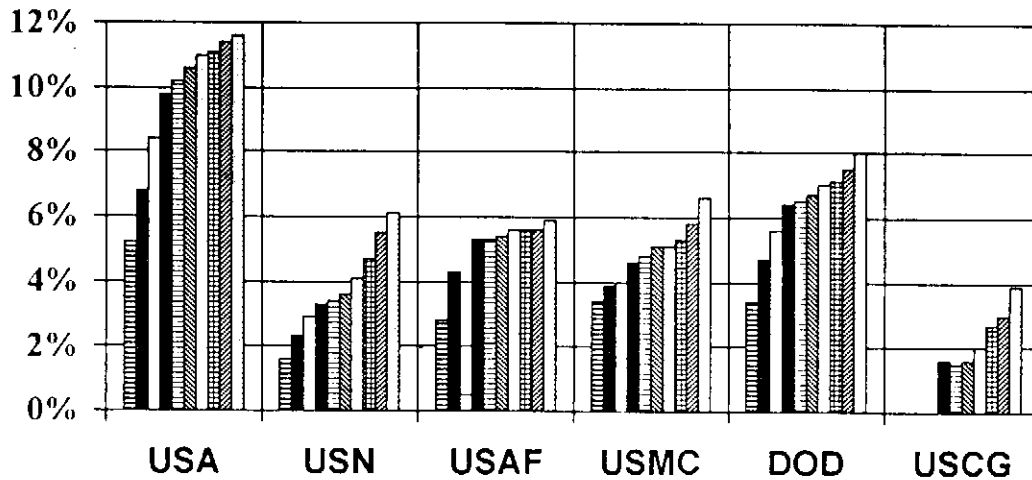
Black Participation in Today's Military

- Today, black participation in all branches of the military is significant. As of March, 1998, 19.6% (281,158) of those serving on active duty were Black. The highest representation was in the Army with 26.7% (128,209) while the lowest existed in the Air Force at 15.3% (56,431) and the Coast Guard at 6.5% (2,228). Blacks are also reaching the highest officer and enlisted ranks in greater numbers. In 1998, 45 Blacks were general officers with more than half (26) serving in the Army. There were also 2,186 Blacks serving in the highest noncommissioned officer rank (E-9). (5:12)

Black contributions to society and more specifically the military have been immeasurable. From the founding of our nation to the present, Black Americans have contributed to our heritage through the strength of their convictions and wealth of their abilities.

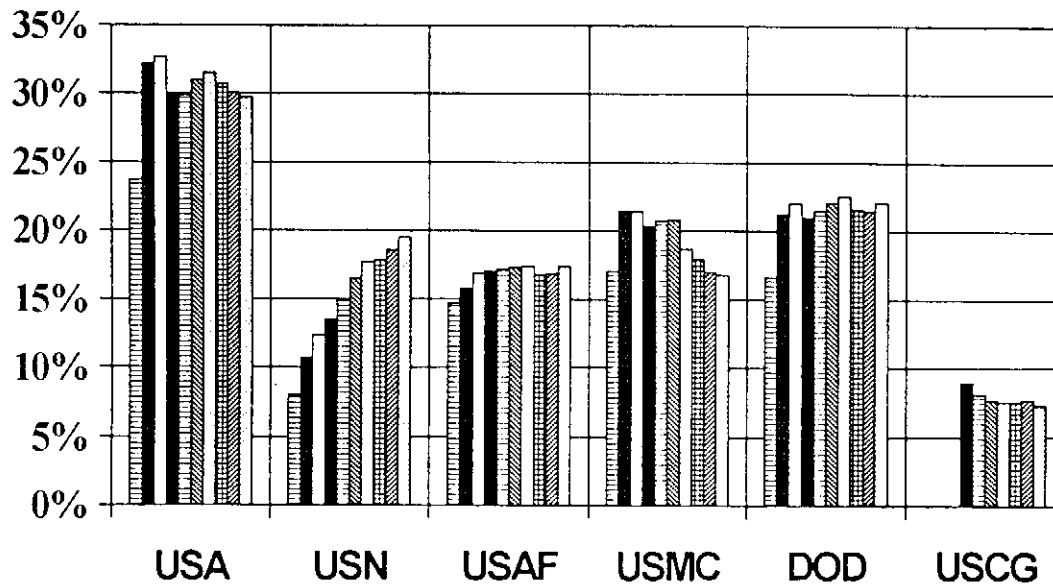
BLACK OFFICERS

% of the Officers in Each Service



BLACK ENLISTED

% of the Enlisted in Each Service



■ 1976 ■ 1979 □ 1982 ■ 1985 ■ 1987 ■ 1989 □ 1991 ■ 1993 ■ 1995 □ 1997

Table 1

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